



Town of Arlington, Massachusetts
730 Massachusetts Ave., Arlington, MA 02476
Phone: 781-316-3000

webmaster@town.arlington.ma.us

School Committee Minutes 03/22/2012

Approved by Arlington School Committee, May 10, 2012

*Arlington School Committee
Regular Meeting
Thursday, March 22, 2012
6:30 p.m.*

*Arlington High School
School Committee Room – Sixth Floor
869 Massachusetts Avenue
Arlington, MA 02476*

Present: Ms. Cindy Starks, Chair, Dr. Kirsi Allison-Ampe, Vice Chair, Mr. Judson Pierce, Secretary, Mr. Jeff Thielman, Mr. Joseph Curro, Jr., Ms. Leba Heigham, and Mr. William Hayner.

Dr. Kathleen Bodie, Superintendent, Mr. Robert Spiegel, Human Resource Officer, Ms. Diane Johnson, Chief Financial Officer, Ms. Siobhan Foley, AEA Representative, Mr. Alexis Moisand, Student Representatives and Ms. Karen Fitzgerald, Administrative Assistant

Absent: Dr. Wallis Raemer, Interim Assistant Superintendent, Interim Special Education Director, and AAA Representative

Mr. Thielman arrived at 6:35 p.m.

Mr. Curro exited the meeting at 7:36 p.m. and returned at 7:39 p.m.

Ms. Johnson exited the meeting at 7:45 pm. and returned at 7:50 p.m.

Mr. Thielman exited the meeting at 8:36 p.m. and returned to 8:38 p.m.

Ms. Starks opened the meeting at 6:34 p.m. Ms. Starks and Dr. Bodie said the Arlington School Community was saddened by the loss of Allana DeMella, who is a teaching assistant in the third grade co-taught program at Peirce, was killed while on a long weekend in Florida, Allana was 7 months pregnant. Our hearts and prayers go out to Allana's husband and family. Ms. Starks also pointed out the passing of retiree Traffic Supervisor, Edith Marino and Mary White's daughter, Donna Holland.

Public Participation

Ms. Jane Biondi and her daughter invited everyone to support the Arlington Education Foundation's Annual Trivia Bee on Sunday March 25th 3:00-5:00pm at Arlington Town Hall.

Ms. Catherine Moloney and Meg Moloney invited the Arlington School Committee and community to the Thompson school play on April 11, 12 at 7 p.m. and April 13, 9:30 am at AHS Auditorium and tickets at \$5.00 can be purchased at the door, the day of the show.

Annual and Special Town Meeting Warrant Review

Dr. Bodie and Ms. Starks reviewed the following Annual and Special Town Meeting Warrant Review which the School Committee, and the School Committee will take no position, work with council and take "no action" on most articles unless noted. Mr. Thielman would like the Chair and Superintendent to review Articles with the Finance Committee.

~~~~~ Article 12: Vote-Bylaw Amendment/Human Resources Department

~~~~~ Article 13: Bylaw Amendment Budget Submissions

~~~~ Article 14: Bylaw Amendment/Municipal Charge Liens-School Fees

Dr. Allison-Ampe moved that the Committee hereby instructs the Chair to request of the Board of Selectmen its recommendation for positive action under Warrant Article 14, including but not limited to its recommendation that Town Meeting take the following vote:

VOTED: That Title I, Article 21, of the Town Bylaws is amended by adding the following paragraphs to Title I, Article 21 ("Municipal Charges Liens") of the Town Bylaws:

- (g) school athletic fees;**
- (h) kindergarten fees;**
- (i) bus fees;**
- (j) music fees;**
- (k) preschool fees.**

Seconded by Ms. Heigham

Voted: 7-0

Dr. Allison-Ampe move that the Committee instructs the Chair to write a note outlining why the School Committee desires to have the Municipal Charges Liens Bylaw amended, to be included with the above, seconded by Ms. Heigham.

Voted: 7-0

~~~~~ Article 19: Personnel Bylaw Amendment/Vacation Carryover  
~~~~~ Article 27: Transfer Of Real Property/Gibbs Junior High School  
~~~~~ Article 32: Report/Implementation Of Consolidated Town-School Finance  
~~~~~ Article 33: Home Rule Legislation/Municipal Finance Department  
~~~~~ Article 40: Appropriations/Town Budgets  
~~~~~ Article 47: Appropriation/Special Education Reserve Account  
~~~~~ Article 58: Appropriation/Arlington High School Concussion Reduction Program

**Dr. Allison-Ampe moved to take no action on Warrant Article 58: Appropriation/Arlington High School Concussion Reduction Program, seconded by Mr. Hayner.**

**Voted: 6-1, Mr. Hayner voting No**

Special Town Meeting

~~~~~ Article 7: Capital Budget/Thompson School

Update on 2011-2012 District Goals

Dr. Bodie presented updates on the 2011 – 2012 District Goals and said that these are just notes from the staff and not to be considered her District Goals report. The District Goals report will be given in June 2012. Dr. Bodie will continue to provide additional updates on various goals over the next few months. Mr. Thielman suggested Dr. Bodie to provide aggregated data grade by grade and common assessment data. The committee members also suggested to Dr. Bodie when given updates, they can see the changes to the document the Superintendent provides at each meeting. Mr. Hayner asked Dr. Bodie to bring forth the cost for a full Math RTI program.

Superintendent's Report

Recommendation for renewals

Dr. Bodie asked the School Committee to approve her recommendation for renewal for Ms. Diane Johnson, Chief Financial Officer's contract, given the term of her contract ends June 30, 2012 and the School Committee must notify her by April 1, if not to renew. Dr. Bodie pointed out the goals Ms. Johnson completed: Post budget documents to our website, share monthly reports with district, develop position control system, review update on purchasing procedures, developed single budgets for all stake holders, developed chart of accounts, and prepare documents for MSBA last year. This year Ms. Johnson provided a design system to collect all Kindergarten fees, provided documents to Thompson School Rebuild and obtained Green Grant for the Stratton School, became Certified Business Administrator and certified Purchasing Agent and Dr. Bodie stated she trusts the budget numbers, therefore Ms. Johnson has accomplished her goals.

Mr. Thielman moved the adoption of the Superintendent Bodie's recommendation regarding the Chief Financial Officer, Ms. Johnson's contract, seconded by Ms. Heigham.

Mr. Hayner said he had advocated in the past and will continue to advocate for a fair and balanced evaluation tool for all school employees as a determiner of renewal. Mr. Hayner sought to review the evaluations of the CFO in order to

make an objective decision and is deeply disturbed he had been forced to make this decision without seeing the evaluations. He had to make his decision based on personal observations and statements made to him from constituents. Mr. Hayner said there are many concerns about the CFO performance that have come to his attention. The few which have been repeated to him throughout the past year are the fees we charge for different programs, how she communicates with others, and when is someone going to hold the CFO responsible for the short fall, therefore he will vote No on the renewal.

Mr. Curro also said he will vote No and said Ms. Johnson is a straight shooter and he appreciates this but this also frustrates him too. Mr. Curro said he had seen the good, bad and the ugly over the past two years and he was clearly unhappy with the way the short fall was communicated to him and the School Committee members. Mr. Curro also said he is concerned of Ms. Johnson's push back on much of what the School Committee members request,. Mr. Curro would like the administration to look at the entire way the Chief Financial Officer handles customer service and questions if it is a good efficient use of the CFO's time. Mr. Curro regrettably agrees with Mr. Hayner and will not support her contract renewal. Mr. Curro pointed out the first budget presentation to FinCom did not go well, but last year went better and in wake of the F10 short fall agrees with Dr. Bodie on the work Ms. Johnson did on the Stratton Green Repair Grant, and the balance assessments. Mr. Curro said there are four problems in the way the current contract is structured. 1) School Committee retains authority to hire Business Manager, the current contract we seeded all that authority away, Mr. Curro agreed with Mr. Hayner on 2) School Committee has no formal evaluation process of the CFO and the administration 3) if we leave the contract open ended, and enter into a three year contract, we know that there is a potentially financial reorganization down the road and we are closing the door on that. 4) the current contract is flawed by placing a notification deadline right in the middle of the budget process and to present to Finance Committee and to Town Meeting, for these reasons Mr. Curro would have to vote against the motion .

Mr. Curro did state that if the motion was presented as : to enter into negotiations with a new contract up to 18 months, and to look at the revision of notification deadline and more clearly specify the full School Committees roles in the evaluation of a formal evaluation, he could support it.

Ms. Heigham spoke that it has been a growing process for the Chief Financial Officer over the past few years and has seen a lot of changes over the past four years and that this position has been like a revolving door and appreciates the superintendent's recommendation to renew Ms. Johnson. Ms. Heigham said that Ms. Johnson gracefully weathered the MASBO audit and maintained her professionalism and her ability to work with others on the recommendations. Ms. Heigham said renewal of Ms. Johnson's contract would move the district forward and we are in a good place and it would be ill advised to jeopardize this.

Ms. Pierce also supports the Superintendent's Recommendation. He stated that he appreciates the monthly reports and pointed out that continuity and experience matters and we are moving in a positive direction and we don't want to see a shift in that, therefore, he will support the motion.

Dr. Allison-Ampe said this is not an official evaluation but will support the motion and respects Dr. Bodie's recommendation and said our schools do need consistency.

Mr. Thielman will approve the motion and echoes Ms. Heigham, Mr. Pierce and Dr. Allison-Ampe and said we will be sending Arlington a message you can grow here and you can stay here.

Ms. Starks appreciations all the sentiments and comments and agrees to look to draft a new contract. Ms. Starks will support the motion and has based this decision on three reasons 1) on the way she sees improvements in the Business Office, 2) to keep consistency in the administration 3) and that it is the recommendation of Superintendent Bodie.

**Voted: 5-2, Mr. Hayner and Mr. Curro voted No
Motion passed**

Mr. Curro moved to request our negotiations for the contract of the Chief Financial Officer consider the issues of term of contract, School Committee's role and performance of evaluation, and potential revision of notification deadlines for contract renewal, seconded by Mr. Hayner.

Ms. Heigham will not support this motion and agrees with notification deadline but the Superintendent is qualified to lead her team and also said Ms. Johnson will exceed the tenure of this role and that the School Committee will overstep their role without the state's new tool for administrator's evaluations.

Mr. Thielman said that there would be no harm in having them consider these things and Mr. Hayner agreed. Dr. Allison-Ampe would like to include legal guidance on the contract.

Voted: 6-1, Ms. Heigham voted No

Dr. Bodie continued her Superintendent Report on recognizing three students from Arlington who have received national honors and are 2012 Boston Globe Scholastic Awards winners. From Arlington High School, Elena LaCourt won a gold key, the highest national award possible, and Quentin Stipp won a silver key and student from Ottoson Middle School, Sorrel Galantowicz won a gold key. Dr. Bodie also mentioned a high school senior who won first prize from the Lions Club speech contest, who offered to donate her \$500 prize money to the Science Department.

Subcommittee & Liaison Reports

Policies & Procedures, Mr. Judson Pierce presented the following policies for a Second Reading:

~~~~~ BDA - School Committee Organizational Meeting  
~~~~~ BDA-E School Committee Norms and Standards  
~~~~~ IJNDC - Internet Web Page Policy

**Mr. Pierce moved to approve BDA - School Committee Organizational Meeting and adopt BDA-E School Committee Norms and Standards, seconded by Mr. Hayner.**

**Voted: 6-0 (Mr. Thielman had exited the room)**

**Mr. Pierce moved to approve IJNDC - Internet Web Page Policy, seconded by Mr. Hayner.**

**Voted: 7-0**

Budget, Dr. Kirsi Allison-Ampe said she compiled a list of budget process and changes to hand off to the new budget chair.

Community Relations, Ms. Leba Heigham no meeting to report on.

Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment & Accountability, Mr. Jeff Thielman no meeting to report on.

Kindergarten Advisory Committee, Mr. Bill Hayner reported he held three meetings and a fourth meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 4, 2012.

Chair, Ms. Cindy Starks thanked everyone on their support, and the committee members thanked the Chair for a job well done the past year.

Consent Agenda

~~~~~ Approval of Warrant: Warrant # 12123, Dated, March 8, 2012, Total Amount: \$392,793.41  
~~~~~ Approval of School Committee Minutes: none  
~~~~~ Approval of World Language Trip to France

Ms. Heigham moved the approval of the Consent Agenda, Approval of Warrant: Warrant # 12123, Dated, March 8, 2012, Total Amount: \$392,793.41 and Approval of World Language Trip to France, seconded by Dr. Allison-Ampe.

Voted: 7-0

Secretary's Report

Mr. Pierce reported on all correspondence received from March 2 to March 22, 2012.

Email forward regarding EDCO Decision.

Letter from Ms. Starks asking for edits to proposed letter to the Board of Selectmen, Town Manager and Finance Committee. Information about proposed trip to Costa Rica with 20 AHS Spanish students during February vacation 2013.

Minutes from 2/9/12 ASC Meeting.

Copy of March 2, 2012 letter from ASC to the Town Manager.

Letter from the new Town Manager to fellow employees of the Town of Arlington dated March 1, 2012.

Forward with information concerning the annual AEF Trivia Bee on March 25th.

Email from Dr. Bodie congratulating the Visual Arts Department.

Brckett School Newsletter dated March 5, 2012.

Email inviting the ASC to attend the Occupy Arlington event on March 18th from 2-4pm.

March 5, 2012 Letter from the ASC to Eastport Real Estate regarding 22 Mill Street.

Letters thanking those who had applied to serve on the Kindergarten Advisory Committee.

March 1, 2012 Approved Policies HE/HF, KDBA, KDBA-E, and BEC.

Approved ASC Minutes of 12/22/11 and 1/12/12.

Forwarded legal opinion from Attorney Rebecca Bryant concerning internet web page policy.

Warrant for Annual Town Meeting and Special Town Meeting.

Information from PromeTour regarding French Exchange Program in April 2013.
Special Education Client Advisory dated March 2012 from the law firm of Murphy, Hesse, Toomey and Lehane.
Copy of letter Ms. Starks sent to the Town Manager, Finance Committee, and Board of Selectmen, dated March 13, 2012.
Copy of letter Ms. Starks sent to EDCO concerning the ASC approved motion from 3/8/12.
Draft of ASC Minutes from 2/9/12 and 3/8/12.
Letter from Dr. Raemer to David Good thanking him and Google for the generous donation of Chromebooks to OMS and AHS.
Approved Minutes of the 3/12/12 Kindergarten Advisory Committee.
Copy of March 6, 2012 letter from the MSBA to the Town Manager concerning the Stratton School.
Brackett School Newsletter dated March 19, 2012.
METCO Lobby Day 3/14/12, reminder.
Information from our counsel concerning the Open Meeting Law.
Copy of Town Annual Report.
March 5, 2012 letter from the Middlesex Sheriff with his Year in Review Report.
Email forward regarding Spanish Immersion.
Email forward with ASC Negotiations Committee AAA, and AEA (Unit C) posting and agenda for 3/19/12 and 3/22/12.
Email forward from Mr. Curro with materials from Barry Bluestone.
Email forward with the sad news of an AHS student who suffered a massive seizure.
Email from Dr. Bodie with the tragic news of the loss of Alanna DeMella a teaching assistant in the third grade co taught program at Peirce.
Copy of letter from Richard Greco Retirement Administrator regarding the passing of Ms. Edith Marino, a retiree who worked as a Traffic Supervisor.
Email forward with the sad news of the passing of Mary White's daughter, Donna Holland.

Executive Session

Mr. Curro moved to enter into Executive Session at 8:58 p.m. to conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with union and/or nonunion personnel or contract negotiations with union and/or nonunion in which if held in an open meeting may have a detrimental effect and to conduct strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation, in which if held in an open meeting may have a detrimental effect, Collective bargaining may also be conducted and to exit only for adjournment, seconded by Ms. Heigham.

Roll Call: unanimous

Voted: 7-0

Adjourn

Mr. Curro moved to exit out of Executive Session and to adjourn at 9:14 p.m., seconded by Ms. Heigham.

Roll Call: unanimous

Voted: 7-0

Respectfully submitted by
Karen Fitzgerald
Administrative Assistant
Arlington School Committee/jp